

HARTFORD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Wednesday, July 17, 2024

Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present & Date their Term is Up: Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Dennis Brown (3/11/27), Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).

Staff Present: Town Planner Matt Osborn.

Others Present: Selectboard Liaison Lannie Collins and consultant Architectural Historian Brian Knight.

A hybrid meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission was held on Wednesday, July 17, 2024 in Meeting Room 2 at the Hartford Town Hall. Chair Jonathan Schechtman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

1. **Public Comments:** Jonathan asked if there are any public comments. There were none.
2. **HHPC Minutes:** Jonathan asked if there are any corrections to the Minutes of June 12th. Being none, Dennis Brown made a motion to approve the HHPC Minutes of June 12, 2024 as written. The motion was seconded by Pat Stark and unanimously approved.
3. **Taft's Flat Historic District Nomination Update:** Brian Knight was present to provide an update on the Taft's Flat nominations. Brian reported that he has completed drafts of the Demers Avenue Historic District nomination and the Victory Circle Historic District nomination. Matt noted that comments have been sent to Brian regarding Demers Avenue Draft. He stated that he has received comments from the HHPC regarding the Victory Circle nomination and will forward them to Brian in the next few days. Matt noted that we need to schedule a community meeting for the Victory Circle nomination. He asked if Wednesday, August 21st would work. Brian and the HHPC agreed. Brian noted that he would like to see if State Architectural Historian Devin Colman could review the draft nominations before he leaves the position next month. Brian noted that there have been delays in the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation review of historic district nominations. Matt and the HHPC agreed that we should try to get the draft nominations to Devin as soon as possible. Matt stated that we should shoot for a formal community meeting on both historic districts in September. The HHPC agreed.
4. **Section 106 Reviews:** Matt reported that it is highly unusual to receive so many Section 106 reviews at the same time. Jonathan agreed. Matt handed out a publication "A Citizen's Guide to Section 106 Review". He noted that when federal funds are involved in a project, local Certified Local Government's (CLG's) are given an opportunity to comment on the impact on historic resources. He noted that the HHPC is the local CLG.
 - a. **Railroad Station Platform:** Matt noted that American with Disability Act (ADA) improvements are proposed for the Railroad Station. The HHPC reviewed the plans and discussed whether there are any impacts to nearby historic resources. There was discussion of the closed pedestrian tunnel that goes from the train station under the railroad tracks and up to the former Post Office (currently the Center for Cartoon Studies building). Access to the tunnel has been blocked for several decades. The proposal will preserve the tunnel. There was consensus among the HHPC that documentation of the tunnel history should be preserved even though it is unlikely that the tunnel will be used again. Matt noted that the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation recommends adding the pedestrian tunnel to the White River Junction Historic District as a contributing resource. Matt stated that the HHPC has never discussed this as a possibility. Lannie suggested inquiring with VTrans if there are higher resolution copies

of the Railroad Station and tunnel than what was provided in their information packet. Pat agreed to see if the Hartford Historical Society had any plans. Pat made a motion to agree with the No Adverse Effect determination by the Federal Railroad Administration, the HHPC would like to see documentation of the history of the tunnel and would like to seek Section 106 Consulting Party status. The motion was seconded by Dennis Brown and approved by a 4 to 0 vote.

- b. Bliss Road Telecommunication Facility Tower Replacement and Height Increase: Matt reported that the proposal is to replace the existing 78' wood pole and appurtenances with a 91' monopole 30' south of the existing pole all within the existing telecommunication facility complex. The site is located off of Bliss Road in a heavily wooded area. Matt reported that the current pole is not camouflaged. The proposed monopole will not be camouflaged either. Matt noted that the existing pole is well-concealed and very difficult to locate. He added that the Town telecommunication regulations restricted the height of telecommunication facilities to no more than 20' above the average height of the surrounding trees. Over time, trees grow and the telecommunication pole needs to be raised. The HHPC concurred that the proposed monopole will have no impact on historic resources in the area.
- c. Connecticut River Road Telecommunication Tower Extension: Matt reported that the proposal is to extend the existing 84' camouflaged monopole to 105'. The telecommunication facility is located off of Connecticut River Road near the southbound 1-91 off ramp to I-89. Matt noted that the current pole is camouflaged and well-concealed. The proposed monopole will be camouflaged as well. He added that the Town telecommunication regulations restricted the height of telecommunication facilities to no more than 20' above the average height of the surrounding trees. Over time, trees grow and the telecommunication pole needs to be raised. The HHPC concurred that the proposed monopole extension will have no impact on historic resources in the area.

- 5. **Railroad Row Kiosk**: Matt reported that Mary Kay Brown submitted revisions to the kiosk panel narrative on the World War I and II monument. There was discussion and agreement that we should hold off on deciding the final specific text until all of the text for the panels has been completed and a creative writer can edit the text. Lannie suggested asking the new Town Communications Specialist to review the text.
- 6. **World War I & II Monument**: Dennis reported that the monument was completed and there were funds left over. Options on what to do with the funds include maintenance of the monument or create another monument. Lannie suggested moving the War Monument at the Town Hall to Veterans Park.
- 7. **Hartford Performing Arts History (PAH) Project**: Matt reported that he will be meeting with Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield to look at the HHPC budget to see if there are funds for the additional interview for the PAH project.
- 8. **Historic District Signs**: Matt reported that he will be meeting with Planning and Development Director Lori Hirshfield to look at the HHPC budget to see if there are funds for the additional historic district signs.
- 9. **Vermont Mobile Home Park and Subdivisions Historic Survey**: Matt reported that the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation is promoting a survey of historic mobile home parks and their subdivisions in Vermont. Matt noted that the State believes that mobile home parks and their subdivisions are an important part of Vermont's transportation and cultural history, representing a

more affordable option for housing stock with a unique historical development. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has commissioned a consultant (Mead & Hunt) to identify and document historic mobile home parks and subdivisions throughout the state with an important connection to Vermont's history. Matt noted that Hartford has five mobile home parks. He forwarded the email to Pat Stark. Pat wasn't sure that Hartford's mobile home parks have anything particularly interesting about their history.

10. HHPC Openings: Jonathan noted that there is still one opening on the HHPC.

11. Announcements:

- a. September Meeting: Matt reported that he received a call from Linda Miller of the Hartford Historical Society (HHS) that they are holding a lecture on Wednesday, September 18th. She inquired to see if the HHPC would be able to move the meeting date. Matt responded that he will be on vacation 9/18 and suggested moving the HHPC meeting to Wednesday, 9/11. The HHPC agreed.
- b. Commission Stipend: Lannie reported that the Selectboard included in the current budget stipends for Commission members. Matt noted that if members choose to accept the stipend, there is paperwork that is required as well as a meeting with Human Resources Director Paula Nulty.

12. Next HHPC Meeting: Jonathan noted that the next HHPC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 21st at 5:15 p.m.

13. Adjournment: Susanne made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Dennis and approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

14. HHPC Member Terms: Susanne Walker Abetti (3/21/25), Dennis Brown (3/11/27), Vice-chair Pat Stark (3/7/25) and Chair Jonathan Schechtman (1/9/26).